

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0641

INFO AMCONSUL LUANDA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

DIA

USCINCEUR

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4183

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PO PINS MILI

SUBJ: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF SEPT 28 CRISIS

DEPT REPEAT AS APPROPRIATE

1. BASED ON A FEW SKETCHY FACTS AND MUCH OF OUR OWN SPECULATION, OUR ANALYSIS LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT SPINOLA HAS SURVIVED THE CRISIS OF SEPTEMBER 28 AND WILL REMAIN AS PRESIDENT IF HE SO CHOOSES FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. HIS STATURE HAS BEEN DIMINISHED IN THE PROCESS, WHILE THAT OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM), PARTICULARLY ITS POLITICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE (PCC), HAS BEEN ENHANCED. AS A RESULT, THE POWER BALANCE, WHICH FAVORED THE AFM/PCC IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE COLLAPSE OF THE FIRST PROVISIONAL GOVERN-  
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MENT BUT HAS SINCE INCREASINGLY TILTED IN SPINOLA'S FAVOR, HAS AGAIN

BEEN READJUSTED IN FAVOR OF THE AFM/PCC. SPINOLA HAS, HOWEVER, DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLE RECUPERATIVE ABILITY IN THE PAST AND MAY WELL AGAIN.

2. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE PRINCIPAL INDIVIDUAL BENEFICIARY OF THE CRISIS WILL BE GENERAL COSTA GOMES WHO APPEARS TO HAVE THROWN HIS WEIGHT AGAINST THE HOLDING OF THE PRO-SPINOLA DEMONSTRATION AT THE RIGHT MOMENT.

3. IN TERMS OF BROADER POLITICAL GROUPINGS, THE CRISIS REPRESENTS THE FIRST OPEN TEST OF STRENGTH BETWEEN THE FAR RIGHT AND THE LEFT (FROM COMMUNISTS TO CENTRISTS) AND THE LATTER HAS WON THE ROUND. THE LEFT HAS SHOWN THAT ITS ORGANIZING ABILITY AND CONTROL OF THE PRESS CAN BE MOBILIZED QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO SERVE ITS AIMS IN A TIME OF CRISIS. OVER THE SHORT TERM, THE LEFT HAS SCORED A RESOUNDING SUCCESS OVER THE RIGHT WHICH HAD JUST BEGUN TO GAIN SUFFICIENT SELF-CONFIDENCE TO SHOW ITS HEAD.

4. TO MANY, THE LESSON OF THIS CRISIS MAY BE THAT WHILE THE LEFT IS FREE TO HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS, THAT DEGREE OF CIVIL LIBERTY IS NOT AVAILABLE TO THE RIGHT. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THIS LESSON IS USED TO CONVINCE THOSE IN AUTHORITY TO RECTIFY THE IMBALANCE IN THE INTEREST OF PROVIDING FREE EXPRESSION TO ALL TENDENCIES, OR WHETHER IT WILL SIMPLY CONVINCE THE RIGHT THAT, SHORT OF A COUNTERCOUP, THERE IS NO PLACE FOR THEM IN THE PRESENT PORTUGUESE POLITICAL SCENE.

5. MUCH OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DAY'S EVENTS MUST AWAIT REVELATION OF MORE OF THE FACTS, PARTICULARLY THE MOTIVATIONS OF THOSE IN FAVOR OF THE DEMONSTRATION. OUR GUESS IS THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN MULTIPLE MOTIVATIONS, RANGING FROM THE SIMPLE DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN A SHOW OF SUPPORT FOR SPINOLA AS A MAN SAFELY IN THE CENTER, THROUGH THOSE WHO SAW THE DEMONSTRATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CAUSE DISTURBANCES WHICH COULD BE BLAMED ON THE LEFT AND THUS JUSTIFY REMOVAL OF LEFTISTS FROM POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY, TO, FINALLY, THOSE WHO MIGHT HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN PLANNING A COUP. WE TEND TO DOUBT THAT ANY SERIOUS ATTEMPT AT A COUP WAS UNDER WAY, THOUGH WE WILL NOT BE SURPRISED TO FIND ALLEGED EVIDENCE OF ONE PRODUCED. THERE IS MORE REASON FOR BELIEVING THAT INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING SOME CLOSE TO SPINOLA (SUCH AS GENERAL GALVAODE MELO) MAY HAVE HOPED THAT THE EVENT WOULD PROVIDE SPINOLA WITH SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO REMOVE LEFTISTS FROM

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THE GOVERNMENT. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT PERSONS OF THIS PERSUASION FELT THAT A MASSIVE DISPLAY OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SPINOLA, COMBINED WITH A MAJOR DEMONSTRATION OF INABILITY TO GOVERN BY THE SECOND PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, WOULD PERMIT SUCH A MOVE TO BE SUCCESSFULLY MADE. IF SO, THE GOVERNMENT'S UNEXPECTED FIRMNESS IN DEALING WITH THE TAPSTRIKE MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFORT'S FAILURE.

6. THE EXTENT OF SPINOLA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEMONSTRATION WILL BE THE CRUCIAL FACTOR IN HIS ABILITY TO SURVIVE AS PRESIDENT. GALVAO DE MELO, PROBABLY SPINOLA'S CLOSEST CONFIDANTE, INDICATED TO THE AMBASSADOR SEVERAL DAYS IN ADVANCE OF SEPTEMBER 28 THAT HE WAS WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES TO TURN THE DEMONSTRATION INTO A VEHICLE BY WHICH SPINOLA COULD EFFECTIVELY CURB THE "COMMUNISTS" IN THE GOVERNMENT (AMONG WHOM GALVAO DE MELO WOULD INCLUDE THE PRIME MINISTER, MELO ANTUNES, VICTOR ALVES, AND COSTA MARTINS, AS WELL AS ALVARO CUNHAL). HOWEVER, JUST AS SPINOLA LET PALMA CARLOS ACT AS HIS SURROGATE IN THE JULY CRISIS BUT KEPT HIMSELF OSTENSIBLY UNINVOLVED IN THE EFFORT TO HOLD A SNAP PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, (WE ALSO PRESUME THAT) SPINOLA CAN PROBABLY ESCAPE FROM ANY DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEMONSTRATION, AND PARTICULARLY ITS PROVOCATIVE OR COUP-TYPE OVERTONES, ASIDE FROM RESPONSIBILITY FOR NOT HAVING PUBLICLY FROWNED ON THE DEMONSTRATION UNTIL A CRISIS HAD BEEN GENERATED BY IT. THE ANTI-DEMONSTRATION PROPAGANDA AND POST-CRISIS COMMENTARY HAS LARGELY EXONERATED HIM BY ACCUSING THOSE RESPONSIBLE OF HAVING TRIED TO USE HIS POPULARITY TO GAIN THEIR OWN (EVIL) ENDS. WE TEND TO DISCOUNT THE REPORTS THAT HE ATTEMPTED TO ASSUME FULL POWER AND ARREST THE PRIME MINISTER AS BEING UNCHARACTERISTIC OF HIM. HE CAN PROBABLY MAINTAIN THE POSITION THAT HE SAW NOTHING WRONG IN ALLOWING FREE EXPRESSION OF WHATEVER SORT AND ACTED TO END THE DEMONSTRATION ONLY WHEN HE HAD BECOME CONVINCED THAT TO ALLOW IT WOULD LEAD TO SERIOUS PUBLIC DISORDER.

7. AT THE ROOT OF THE PRESENT CRISIS AND THE CONTINUING POLITICAL INSTABILITY WITHIN THE GOVERNING ORGANS IS SPINOLA'S OWN CHARACTER. ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT HIS EGO WAS HEAVILY INVOLVED IN A DEMONSTRATION OSTENSIBLY OF SUPPORT FOR HIM, HIS MILITARY PAST HAS NOT EQUIPPED

HIM TO SHARE POWER WITH OTHERS. HE IS ACCUSTOMED TO GIVING ORDERS AND HAVING THEM OBEYED; FOR HIM, THOSE WHO EXPRESS OPINIONS THAT DIFFER WITH HIS ARE ENEMIES AND, IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT, PROBABLY COMMUNISTS  
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OR CRYPTO-COMMUNISTS. THE AFM HAS REPEATEDLY MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT INTENDS TO STAY IN PLACE TO SEE ITS PROGRAM CARRIED OUT UNTIL INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AND ARE IN WORKING ORDER WHICH HAVE THE LEGITIMACY OF A POPULAR MANDATE. HOPEFULLY, THE PRESENT CRISIS WILL INDUCE SPINOLA TO ACCEPT A POSITION IN WHICH POWER IS SHARED AND DISSIDENT VIEWS ARE PERMITTED. OTHERWISE HE WILL EITHER LEAVE OFFICE OR WE CAN EXPECT THAT THE POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN HIM AND THE AFM WILL CONTINUE WITH PERIODIC CRIDES PUNCTUATING PORTUGAL'S POLITICAL LIFE.  
SCOTT

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